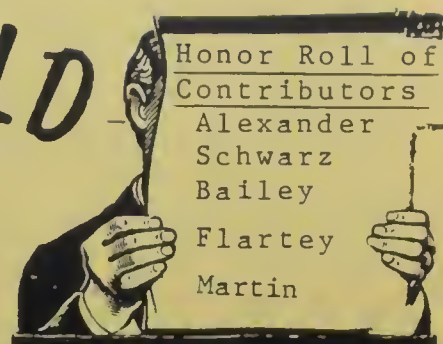




NUMISMATIC LITERARY GUILD Newsletter

JULY - AUGUST, 1984
Volume 17, No. 4



A LATE NEWSLETTER - - The late arrival of this issue is due to the need to include data about the recent meeting of the Guild. We regret the delay but know that you will enjoy the information furnished by Executive Director David T. Alexander. This newsletter is also the last one to be produced by Lee Martin.

(See copy elsewhere regarding NLG Bash, awards, etc.)

THE DIRECTOR'S DESK.....

Another outstanding milestone in the NLG year is now behind us: the successful 1984 Bash at Detroit convention of the American Numismatic Association. Thumbing its collective nose at some of the early alarmist tales condemning Motown as Murder City, the ANA enjoyed a solid, event-filled gathering combining great summer weather, a fine hotel and a commodious convention hall for the enormous bourse.

Having the NLG table at a strategic center of the bourse area, visiting Guild members got a fine overview of this bustling activity. NLG thanks go enthusiastically to General Chairperson Florence Schook and to Convention Coordinator Ruthann Brettell for their cheerful aid.

A full report on the 1984 Bash will appear elsewhere in the Newsletter. Despite the rescheduling of the event, we avoided confusion with a timely postcard reminder and enjoyed a full house of Guild members. A special lift of the communal hat to all those who took part under MC Alan Herbert; each will note (not too painfully we hope) a full report of their input in the Bash story!

NLG Writers' Symposium Moderator Carl W. A. Carlson and his panel also receive full reporting elsewhere. Carl's dedication assured another truly professional presentation in the steadily growing series now recognized as another significant Guild contribution to each ANA convention.

With new Constitution and Bylaws, re-

vised competition rules, the NLG year has been a full one, full in achievement and in satisfaction to all who lent their time and talent to our cause. The new organizational year begins, however, with an immediate challenge.

Veteran Editor Lee Martin is being ordered by the medical profession to ease up on his many post-retirement activities. Health problems make necessary his departure from the editor's chair after a career of 16 years of solid, dedicated, uncomplaining service to the Guild. While we have tried to recognize these years of unstinting aid to NLG by voting Lee the first Honorary Life Member under the new Bylaws, we do need to find a NEW EDITOR, pronto!

The NLG Newsletter appears at present every two months. The editor needs to bring together articles, prepare the copy for printing and supervises the ads which have thus far carried the cost of the publication. Under Lee's direction the newsletter has reached new heights of membership input and regard; the new editor will find his or her task easier thereby.

Recent discussions among Board members reveals that the Guild will view favorably the granting of a stipend to the incoming editor to reimburse in part the hours needed for a continuing first-rate publication. All those interested are urged to contact me at 515-285-5783, or write me at P. O. Box 7214, Des Moines, Iowa 50309. I will be happy to talk with you.

As the executive director may be relocating soon, as my brief spell "between posi-

tions" here in Des Moines shows signs of ending, keep trying until you reach me. If you wish, contact Lee or any Board member listed in this issue.

Congratulations go to Anthony Swiatek for re-election to the NLG Board. Under the new Constitution and Bylaws, we will elect a whole new slate next year; Anthony is the last to see election under the older arrangements.

All look forward to 1984-1985 as another time of forward motion for NLG. We hope all of you will come forward yourselves with any suggestions or ideas for increased service to numismatic writing.

Speaking for myself, I must say that my own involvement as executive director has been one of the most enjoyable experiences of recent years. The Guild has a magnificent potential for ongoing service, and I too look to the coming year with enthusiasm.

AD

DAVID THOMASON ALEXANDER
Executive Director N.L.G.

NLG WRITERS' SYMPOSIUM DISSECTS AUCTION INDUSTRY

Numismatic auctions: their past, present and future roles in the hobby-industry provided the subject matter for Moderator Carl W.A. Carlson's panel July 30 as the Numismatic Literary Guild presented its annual Writers' Symposium in suite La Salle B of Detroit's Westin Hotel.

Second of NLG's offerings at the American Numismatic Association's 94th anniversary convention, the symposium brought to the podium four top professionals in the field of auction cataloging: Martin Gengerke, Walter Breen, Doug Winter and David T. Alexander.

Following a brief introductory speech suggesting definitions and terms used in the auction world, Carlson introduced Martin Gengerke, now a fellow cataloger at NASCA in New York, noted as a U.S. paper money specialist as well as overall professional.

Gengerke provided a historic overview of auctions in the U.S. since the early 19th century, charting development into separate numismatic sales from the earlier inclusion with antiques, minerals and art works of the earliest era.

The New York cataloger recalled the great names of that time, Edward Cogan, Joseph Mickley, Ebenezer Mason on the dealing side, Lorin G. Parmelee, Matthew

Stickney, Jenks and Bushnell on the collector side.

The transformation of auction offerings under the flamboyant Hudson and Henry Chapman, the feudings of such pioneer sages as Ed Frossard and Lyman H. Low were detailed as the field grew into the decades of Thomas L. Elder and figures on the threshold of the modern era such as Wayte Raymond.



From this promising beginning, which valued pedigree, in-depth research and lucid presentation of lots there followed, Gengerke noted, an era he characterized as "the forgettable years," highlighted by

the rise of the "one-liner" description long popular with the more shallow minded professional numismatists.

Recalling his own pioneer researches into auction catalog history and listing, Gengerke named a number of dealers of the 1930s and 1940s whose only recollection in numismatic history will be the briefest of footnotes recalling perhaps thirty sales of no merit other than as fleeting events on the larger stage.

Delving into the next era of auction history was noted numismatist Walter Breen, who drew on his years of experience with Wayte Raymond and John J. Ford in the early 1950 to trace the real beginning of the restoration of true research cataloging after the previous speaker's "Forgettable years."

Breen examined this transformation to modern standards, recalling with particular attention the late B. Max Mehl, whose colorful style often was substituted for scientific description and occasionally even honest description, the First Coinvestors staffer recalled.

The Berkeley numismatist touched upon the issue of editorial review of a cataloger's work by management, recalling a few instances in which his own wording underwent modification by one firm, his actual grading by another.

Heritage Rare Coin cataloger Doug Winter described himself as a bridge between the younger generation of catalogers and the established names in the auction cataloging profession. Winter also underlined the need for recognition not only for the value of research, but for the very real importance of those performing that research for their auction house employers.

The Guild, Winter pointed out, can be

of significant help in recognizing and encouraging talent in this area. He cited the recent sales offered by his Dallas, Texas firm as examples of modern research, particularly in the areas of U.S. coinage.

David T. Alexander called before all things, for an understanding that without competent, professional catalogers, the auction field would cease to function. He contrasted this basic importance of catalogers to the frequent disesteem in which they are held by others in professional numismatics.

With the permanent presence of the investment community in professional numismatics, Alexander said, the importance of the auction process as premier means of liquidating portfolios makes the cataloger today of even greater significance than a decade ago.

Material entering the auction process finds and dictates its own level of research, he noted. A BU 1881 Morgan dollar, for instance, finds one level at once, while a rare bronze medal of the U.S. Mint's 19th century will demand another treatment.

The Des Moines professional numismatist compared the real the illusory "bottom lines," noting that a proven record of well-researched and written auction sales contrasts with a short-term, flash in the pan career of one-liners typical of ephemeral auction firms looking to save a few brief dollars. Poorly research and badly written descriptions, hurried and unattractive catalogs do not serve the needs of consignors, Alexander notes, nor does such slipshod conduct lure consignors to return.

This NLG symposium was the first public forum to draw attention to cataloging as a serious branch of numismatic writing, Alexander said, pointing to the new Bylaws of NLG that recognizes this fact in its membership regulations.

Moderator Carlson delivered a scintillating wrap-up, presenting a bouquet of excerpts from catalogs old and new, including such gems of description and barbed satire as "Uncirculated except for excessive wear....Proof surface around hole....suitable for roofing use....one of five unique examples we have handled in recent years..."

Carlson's samples of satiric descriptions of such issues as the 1883 Hawaiian coinage by J. Elliot Woodward and the slashing attacks on fellow dealers vis catalog pages provided a side-splitting finale to the symposium.

The 1984 event, Alexander noted in concluding the meeting, underscored the close relationship between commerce and writing,

between NLG and a significant branch of professional numismatics.

PUBLIC LAW 85-921

By Clem Bailey, N.L.G.



The Supreme Court on July 3, 1984 ruled on the use of photographs and illustrations of United States paper money. The decision did not allow the use of color in the printing of notes nor did they strike down the clause that has to do with the size restrictions.

Quite some months ago Time Magazine published a cover that was in full color showing a tear falling from George Washington's eye. The Secret Service took immediate steps and warned Time as well as other publications that they could not use currency in full color shots on the cover or in the magazine.

Hobby publications, such as ours, labor under such regulations and laws all of the time so it was no surprise to find the Secret Service warning other publications about the laws of the reproduction of currency.

With the help from the United States Treasury Department Congress passed Public Law 85-921 on September 2, 1958. This was further amended on June 20, 1968 which permitted color reproductions of postage stamps under certain conditions.

At any rate Public Law 85-921 stated: "Printed reproductions of paper currency, checks, bonds, revenue stamps and securities of the United States and foreign governments are permissible only for numismatic, educational, historical and newsworthy purposes".

This portion of the law is what the Supreme Court struck down. The Court stated that the provision was invalid because it gave the government too much arbitrary power to decide what may be printed.

Justice Byron White stated, "Under the statute one photographic reproduction will be allowed and another disallowed solely because the government determines that the message being conveyed in the one is newsworthy or educational while the message imparted by another is not."

This particular portion of the law was no problem to numismatic publications but was quite a bother to regular newspapers and other magazines. The Court struck this requirement by an 8-1 vote. (con't)

Attached to PL 85-921 was another requirement, which specified: "illustrations of paper currency, checks or bonds must be in black and white and must be less than three-quarters or more than one and one-half times the size of the genuine obligations. Illustrations must appear in articles, books, journals, newspapers, magazines or albums, and no individual facsimiles of such obligations are permitted.

"The plates and negatives, including glossy prints of paper currency, postage and revenue stamps, bonds and other obligations and securities, used in printing the illustrations in publications must be destroyed after their final use for the purpose for which they were made."

The Supreme Court voted 5-4 to allow the color and size restrictions as outlined in PL 85-921.

Time Magazine argued that the restrictions infringed on its constitutional free speech and press guarantees.

The Court through Justice White stated "Unlike the purpose requirement the size and color limitations do not discriminate on the basis of content. Compliance with the color and size requirements does not prevent Time from expressing any view on any subject or from using illustrations of currency in expressing those views. The color and size limitations effectively serve the government's concededly compelling interest in preventing counterfeiting."

Now that the case is over the end result is not much of a triumph for Time Magazine but clears the air on the use of PL 85-921.

We placed a request to the United States Secret Service to allow the publishing of a full color series of notes on the cover of COINage Magazine. We received a flat rejection under the use of PL 85-921 as well as Section 504 of Title 18 United States Code.

Theirs was only an opinion in an advisory capacity and was not binding upon the Department of Justice or any United States Attorney.

Many readers want to know how this can be done on TV or in the movies.

"Motion picture films, microfilms, and slides of currency can be made in color and black and white for projection on a screen or for telecasting. No prints can be made from the films unless they conform to the restrictions.

"Photographs or printed illustrations

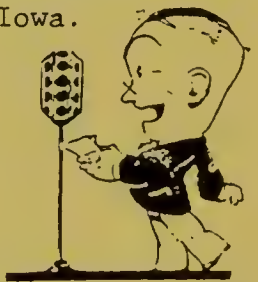
of United States and foreign coins may be used for any purpose, including advertising. The same is true for motion picture films and slides of coins."

So says the Know Your Money book from the Department of the Treasury.

ANNUAL NLG BASH A 1984 ANA
CONVENTION HIGHLIGHT
By David T. Alexander, N.L.G.

A record throng of Numismatic Literary Guild members and well-wishers jammed the Westin Hotel's Mackinac Ballroom in the Detroit Renaissance Center on Sunday evening, July 29, for the annual NLG Bash, recognized highlight of fun, frolic and professional recognition of numismatic writers, reports NLG Executive Director David T. Alexander, Des Moines, Iowa.

More than 200 attended the social event, high point in the 16-year old Guild's activity at the ANA conventions, according to NLG Treasurer, Chuck O'Donnell, who kept a watchful eye on the flying bridge leading to the Bash in the hotel's futuristic tower.



Serving as master of ceremonies was Deadwood, S.D. radio personality and nationally read mint error expert Alan Herbert, assisted by a corps of volunteer skit-producers, actors, ad hoc comical satirists and even one singer for the evening.

Following its established tradition, the NLG offered an artful combination of humor, wedded to a solid series of professional awards presented to numismatic authors, editors and contributors of articles to the numismatic press in the U.S. and Canada.

In a characteristic timely salute to the news headlines, MC Herbert welcomed the "Olympic Torchbearer," who raced through the throng bearing aloft a not-quite-ignited torch, in reality noted numismatic researcher Walter Breen of Berkeley, California.

Providing musical welcome was Ed Reiter, New York Times coin columnist, who had penned and attempted to sing several verses of a new set of lyrics to the rousing song "Kalamazoo" gotten up for the Bash.

The master of ceremonies next distributed a series of gag gifts to selected members of the audience, underscoring the NLG habit of sparing none by roasting all. Typical of the items thus bestowed was an "Instant

Credit Kit" made up of an IOU pad and pencil, given to David T. Alexander in recognition of his joining the ranks of the nation's unemployed just before the Bash.

Continuing with the Olympic theme, with especial references throughout the festivities to the U.S. Olympic coinage, the MC introduced Chicago radio columnist Donn Pearlman, who then directed the Olympic Coin Dipping Competition, staffed by dealers Anthony Swiatek and Scott Travers.

In these worthies' hands, the skit saw transformation of coaster-sized coins into Roosevelt dimes, a tribute to Travers as winner, or "Dip of the Year." During the actual dipping, Pearlman conducted an off-stage grading discussion with ANACS Director Ken Bressett relating to the practices being perfected on-stage.

Striding next to the podium was a blanket-swathed figure, the noted seer and diviner Fitz FitzWater, stage name of Chuck O'Donnell. Recalling a favorite act of a national TV late-night talk show, the Great FitzWater guessed the questions by reading their printed answers. Thus, the proper question to answer "Steel (Steal) Cents" was "What did some Congressmen do in 1973?"

Veteran professional numismatist A.M. (Art) Kagin took the podium to report his finding a "John Pittman" early morning airline flight menu in use during his trip to Detroit. This proved to be a champagne brunch flight menu, billed as a tie to the Rochester numismatist's fame as a connoisseur of the bubbling beverage.



Serving as a continuous play on Krause Publications' recent "Who is Paul Green" promotion was a stream of callers to the podium with messages, telegrams or phone calls for the elusive Green, whose column of dealer interviews is a Numismatic News highlight. After several such interruptions, Green himself emerged to seize the message, face carefully covered to maintain his visual anonymity. "Who was that masked man?" intoned the MC at the retreating figure's back.

Providing truly uproarious entertainment was Donn Pearlman's tape of outstanding radio bloopers from the recent broadcasts of Chicago's CBS affiliate WBBM. Hailed as the reason for several of the voices ceasing to be heard on the station were verbal disasters of all descriptions including those gales of uncontrollable

laughter which occur even in the most professional of audio careers.

Coming in for their shares of sometimes barbed hilarity were coin dealers and collectors, auctions, the U.S. Mint and Treasury, Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the private mints. Watching all with deep interest and probably some confusion were foreign guests, including officials of the Peoples Republic of China minting and export agency, the China Mint Company.

Mixing in the first serious business, although in a semi-humorous vein was Treasurer O'Donnell, who noted that the NLG was financially sound, with more money than last year, but needed to generate additional advertising revenue at once to maintain the NLG Newsletter, now in its 16th year of publication.

Reporting on Guild doings of 1983-84 was Executive Director Alexander, who cited the new Constitution and ByLaws of NLG as a major achievement of the year. Revised Writers' competition rules were also adopted during the same period, Alexander noted, streamlining and perfecting the categories of the contest.

Among visual changes was a new treatment of the NLG typewriter logo, a new design contributed by artist and medalist Nathan Sobel of Brooklyn, N.Y., as his most recent donation of talent to NLG.

An immediate result of the new Bylaws has been the creation of a new Honorary Life Member category, to be bestowed by the Board in recognition of outstanding services to the NLG and to numismatics. Unanimously elected as the first such Honorary Life Members of NLG, announced for the first time at the 1984 Bash were founder-charter member Lee Martin and veteran writer Virgil M. Hancock, Alexander noted.

Martin, whose 1983 San Diego Bash appearance was his last, received the first Honorary Life Membership for his dedication to the Guild, beginning as an actual Founder in 1968, continuing as Board member, long-time newsletter editor, executive director and overall sparkplug for the organization's 16 year history, the Board had felt. A hearty round of applause muted the disappointment of members present that the honoree was not on hand to receive his notification.

Texas numismatist Hancock was cited for his years of successful wielding of the pen in warfare on counterfeit and altered coins, against overgrading and other hobby-industry abuses, Alexander noted. Hancock for years lent NLG the prestige of the linkage of his name as a numismatic crusader with

ANNUAL NLG BASH (con't)

that of NLG. Ill health and recent tragedy prevented Hancock's attendance at the 1984 ANA convention.

A special invitation for all NLG members to attend the Canadian Numismatic Association convention to be held in Regina, Saskatchewan, was issued from the podium by Dr. Chris Gilboy, editor of the Regina Coin Club Quarterly Bulletin. Dr. Gilboy and his wife were observing the operations of the ANA convention with a view to possible ideas for his club's upcoming hosting of CNA, the Regina numismatist reported.

Reserved for the later phase of the Bash were announcements of the winners of the 1984 writers' competition. Leading off were the winners in the categories of numismatic books. Book of the Year went to New York's Scott Travers for his Coin Collectors Survival Manual, released by Arco Publishers.



A first for the competition was the Extraordinary Merit Award bestowed on Q. David Bowers' Virgil Brand: The Man and His Era; this new recognition was created to specifically spotlight works of superior value which might not perfectly fit an existing category or which might not face competition in an existing clear-cut category.

Receiving Best Specialized Book: U.S. Coins was Anthony Swiatek for his Walking Liberty Half Dollar. Best Specialized Book: World Coins went to Ken Jacobs and Eli Levine for Coins of South Africa, a hardback book hailed for numismatic, photographic and technical excellence.

Best Specialized Book: U.S. Paper Money was awarded to Hickman and Oakes' compendium, Standard Catalog of National Bank Notes, Krause Publications, Iola, Wisconsin; this firm's Standard Catalog of World Paper Money, Specialized Issues by Albert Pick took equal honors in World Paper.

Best Specialized Book: Tokens went to George and Melvin Fuld, Patriotic Civil War Tokens, fourth revised edition under the direction of editor-in-chief Jack R. Detwiler and his revision committee of the Civil War Token Society.

Another new recognition was Best Museum or Exhibition Catalog, given to the American Medallist Sculpture Association for its AMSA: First Exhibition, 1983-1984, covering America's first major medallist exhibition since 1910.

As the Guild keeps pace with changes inside the area of numismatic publishing, award

structures have been modified to reflect these significant changes. A new area, numismatic investment books, was highlighted as A.M. (Art) Kagin stepped forward to claim his son's award as first recipient in this category for his Donald H. Kagin's Personal Guide to Rare Coin Investment.

Writers for numismatic periodicals were next as the magazine categories were announced. Best article on coins was Anthony Swiatek's "Toning, Natural and Artificial", COINage; in the same magazine appeared Richard G. Doty's "Let's Collect Decorations," medals and tokens winner; in paper money the prize went to John G. Humphris of Sidney, Ohio, for his "Old Russian Imperial Credit Notes" in the International Bank Note Society Journal; best magazine columnist was Donn Pearlman for "Market Watch," Coins magazine.

In numismatic newspapers the best spot news or continuing story was Beth Deisher's Coin World series on marketing U. S. Olympic coins; best coin story was Ed Reiter's "Amon Carter and the Carter Sale" in Numismatic News; best in tokens was Col. Bill Murray's Coin World story, "Tokens Offer Fun"; taking paper money honors was Charles Surasky of Wilton, Conn., for his pioneering research series in Coin World, "Postal Notes and Money Orders"; best columnist was Ed Reiter in Numismatic News; Best Special Issue recognition went to Coin World's April 18 Central States Convention number.

Endowed by Medallist Art Company, Danbury, Conn., are the Maurice M. Gould Awards for writers in non-numismatic newspapers. Receiving top honors for papers with more than 100,000 circulation was New York Times columnist Ed Reiter: Morristown (NJ) Sunday Record columnist Harold Flartey received the award in less than 100,000 circulation; best syndicated columnist was Gary Palmer of Copley News Service.

Numismatic publications awards went to SAN Journal of the Society for Ancient Numismatics, a Southern California-based organization with Alvin Kleeb as editor, a group with membership and circulation exceeding 100; in the under-100 category the award went for the second straight year to the Regina (Saskatchewan) Coin Club Quarterly Bulletin, Dr. Chris Gilboy, editor.

Selecting Best Auction Catalog for the NLG presented the judges with an unusually tough decision, resulting in a tie between Kagin's 1983 American Numismatic Association

ANNUAL NLG BASH (con't)

Sale and Bowers and Merena's Virgil M. Brand Collection, Part II.

In commercial publications, other than auction catalogs, another first was registered at the 1984 Bash as the Lee Martin Founder's Award for Best Investment Newsletter was received by Anthony Swiatek for Swiatek Reports; the award for other types of commercial materials went to Thomas Underwood for his Continental Newsletter.

The NLG judges did not activate the categories of the photographic contest for 1984. Sparse entries have led the Board to suspend these categories pending a thorough revision of guidelines for next year's contest. This restudy will be chaired by New York's Carl W. A. Carlson with a view to upgrading this aspect of competition across the whole spectrum of numismatic photography.

Receiving Best All-Around Portfolio recognition was Chicago's William S. Nawrocki for his submission of newspaper and magazine stories, research in-depth at the U.S. Mint and photographic work in his extensive research efforts.

Named by the NLG Newsletter editor alone is Best Writer for the Guild's own organ. This year, Editor Martin named long time Arizona contributor Ted Schwarz to this honor for his prolific submissions in 1983-1984.

An entirely new medium for Guild recognition this year was Audio-Visual presentation. Receiving Best Video for his radio column on Chicago's WBBM, "Collectors Corner", was Donn Pearlman, a recognized pioneer in this exciting area of numismatic outreach.

Receiving the first Video award was Educational Video Inc. of Livonia, Mich., for "Collecting and Grading U.S. Coins," accepted by Vice President Petra Pepelash; this cassette presentation was sponsored by the ANA.

Traditionally "in a class of its own" is the supreme NLG honor, the CLEMY, given each year to the individual who has been judged to have shown that sense of proportion and good humor long associated with NLG.



Bestowing this year's CLEMY was the recipient in 1983, nationally known cataloger, professional numismatist and director of ANACS, Kenneth E. Bressett. Skillfully weaving a career outline of the new winner without revealing his identity until the end,

Bressett completed his presentation by announcing the new CLEMY laureate, Chicago's Donn Pearlman, 16th recipient in the line extending back to 1968.

Receiving the lucite CLEMY award, which replaced the 80-odd-pound gold-painted antique typewriter first given by NLG, Pearlman promised to continue his efforts on the Guild's behalf.

Executive Director Alexander closed the meeting with an open invitation to all present to join together in 1985 at the upcoming Baltimore ANA convention.

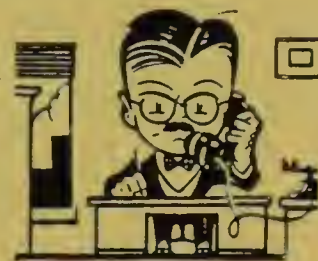
RESIGNATION....

Three strikes and out also applies to your editor, Lee Martin who, because of health problems, is stepping aside. This is the third time Lee has been out of office with Ed Reiter and Jim Johnson ably filling in during interim editor needs.

At age 67, Lee Knows that the time has come to say GOODBYE and asks that his friends continue to assist the new editor so that this Newsletter can become all that it merits.

EDITOR WANTED.....

Executive Director David T. Alexander and the Board will appoint the editor so if you have the time, the desire and the know-how, why not contact them at once?



Duties include answering mail, obtaining and retaining addresses including changes each month, contacting members and alerting writers as to deadline for each issue.

All copy is retyped (or recomputerized). Advertisers must be contacted once a year and fillers compiled regularly. Other basic duties involve camera-ready copy and occasional artwork or line copy. The latter is optional.

Rewards for the effort go far beyond mere compensation. The real reward is the member contacts -- the finest group of numismatists in the hobby enjoy N.L.G. by-lines.

PRIZE WINNER....

Ted Schwarz, who has consistently submitted quality articles is also a consistent winner of the BEST WRITER award in this Newsletter. He did it again this year!

SERENDIPITY COIN CLUB

By Harold Flartey, N.L.G.

SERENDIPITY - - The faculty of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for.

Serendipity coin club history herewith for publication in the NLG newsletter. We have 6 members in the SCC who are members of the NLG! Our motto is "Keep America Clean" and members are busy cleaning up numismatic litter from our streets and parking lots.

SCC Grading Standards

AG - Almost Gone

F - Flat

VF - Very Flat

AU - Almost Unidentifiable

BU - Busted Up

BU/TT - Beat up with tire tracks.



Prior to June 1979 I had been corresponding with Dudley L. McClure, a numismatic writer and member of the Numismatic Literary Guild. He mentioned from time to time that he had found coins on the streets while walking daily for his health. I, in turn, related that I maintained a file for coins I picked up in parking lots, streets and at the local mall. I suggested that we should form a club and since he was on the west coast in Portland, Oregon, and I was in New Jersey, we had the scene covered "from coast to coast". All we needed was some members in between. I wanted him to be the president and I would be Chairman of the Board. When he turned down the presidency, I took the job and named him Chairman of the Board, which he accepted.

Mr. McClure told Numismatic News about his "coin finds" and stated that anyone who walked for reasons of health could apply for membership. There were no bylaws, no dues, no treasury and for a self-addressed stamped envelope anyone could be a Life Member. He gave my P.O. Box number and the applications started coming in. We soon had 25 members.

When McClure again announced his finds and revealed that the SCC was off and running, we doubled our membership rolls with applications from as far away as Guam and West Germany.

In March of 1984 we hit the 100 mark when Edward Boehmke of Waukesha, Wis. checked in. I had found \$3 in the parking lot at the mall so I sprung for 100 membership cards produced by a friendly printer.

In May of 1984 we had 111 members from 30 states and a story in Numismatic News

boosted the membership to 152.

From an idea in June 1979 we have become a viable organization with members all eager to pick up numismatic debris, like coins, paper money, tokens and medals from our streets and parking lots.

In June, 1984 the Serendipity Coin Club was unanimously voted an Honorary Member Club (HC-001) of the Garden State Numismatic Association, the very first coin club so honored.

We have received donations of \$1, \$2 and \$3, even a \$10 bill a man found and didn't think he could lay claim to it because he wasn't a card carrying member (he is now). We don't solicit funds but we don't refuse them either. One applicant sent along a \$100,000 note, a replica of a Confederate note; we have a 500 Drachmai note from Greece and a few foreign coins. A lady sent along a Lincoln cent she found in front of the monkey cage at the San Diego zoo.

One of the club rules is "you get to keep anything you find, unless someone bigger than you claims it", and that has worked out so far. We don't allow electronic gadgets or encourage coin-return slot finds - - just plain "I looked down and there it was!"

The friendly printer sold his business to an unfriendly printer so I went elsewhere. The tab for 500 cards was \$21 plus tax (about .042¢ each) so we are broke and happy with cards for the next 500 members.

If you want to join, you must be a walker, not ashamed to pick up a lowly Lincoln; you must write a note on an 8½x11 sheet of paper (we can punch and file in a loose leaf binder). Tell us something about yourself and your finds, include a self-addressed stamped envelope and we will do the rest (P. O. Box 67, Wharton, New Jersey 07885).

Many folks have told us they wouldn't bother to pick up a cent on the pavement because it won't buy anything. NONSENSE! See a coin and pick it up - - all the day you'll have good luck or toss it in a wishing well and buy yourself a dream!

TOUGH TONGUE TWISTERS OTHER THAN
PETER PIPER PICKED A PECK OF PICKLED PEPPERS

1. Rubber baby buggy bumpers.
 2. The sinking steamer sunk.
 3. If you stick a stock of liquor in your locker, it is slick to stick a lock upon your stock, or some joker who is slicker's going to trick you of your liquor.
- If you fail to lock your liquor with a lock.

GETTING A BOOK INTO PRINT

By Ted Schwarz, NLG

The question of books has arisen again. Several well known writers on various phases of numismatics have contacted me concerning whether or not they should pursue publishing of various works related to their writing. This has ranged from a book which would be a compilation of columns to one which would be a more scholarly volume. Although the subject of books has been addressed in the past, obviously it is time to go into more detail concerning the specific area of numismatic publishing.

There are generally four types of publishing in the numismatic field. The first is vanity publishing, although those who chose this route do not consider themselves "vain". They have something they wish to share with the reading public and feel that by self-publishing, they can do this most effectively. Sometimes this is a personal decision and they use area printers. Other times they are seduced by advertisements for Vantage Press Dorrance and other subsidy companies. However they go about it, when they are done they are left with a garage filled with books, little or no means of distribution, and what is usually an extremely frustrating experience which seldom results in a dissemination of information as they had hoped.

A second approach is one where there is, in effect, a small publishing company created for the purpose of producing numismatic books. This is almost exclusively the domain of the larger coin dealers. Often this will include extremely elaborate catalogues with historical information or just general interest books which, for one reason or another, seem best published in this manner. Dave Bowers has frequently used this approach although he also publishes through large publishing companies with the broader distribution base. It is practical only when sales are carefully planned, costs are controlled and there is a good mailing list as a base for sales. All of those exist with a majority of individuals who follow this route. Unfortunately it is not practical for those of us who are not connected with such companies.

The third approach is to go with the numismatic specialty house. This may be primarily a reprint operation such as the work of Sanford Durst or it may be a relatively limited printing by a company that is, in effect, a small press. Often firms which are small, but publish in a fairly wide

range of fields, will take these on. These companies are very similar to what occurs when a coin dealer publishes through his or her company. However, these are independent operations where distribution has been carefully arranged and mailing lists obtained where appropriate. They can be found anywhere in the United States but must be checked carefully to be certain they have a good track record and have been in business long enough so you are comfortable about their solvency.

The final approach, and I think it is best for the average person, is to go through the full publishing house such as Doubleday, McGraw-Hill, and numerous others. Many large companies will produce hobby



books and their distribution is excellent. Always keep in mind that in general publishing, the majority of books (94% according to one marketing expert) will not sell more than 5,000 copies before they go out of print. It is the remaining 6% which make the big money for the publishers. Yet many companies with which I have worked will typically sell 25,000 copies and more (often a great deal more) of hobby titles because they understand effective distribution and marketing for that particular type of reader. Not all companies which publish for this type of reader do have that understanding, a fact which can lead to a great many ill feelings on everyone's part.

The first consideration you should make when planning to publish a numismatic book is the determination of the audience. Who is going to buy this book? What will be his or her interest? If I were reading my own book, would the type of writing interest me enough to make me want to buy it? All of these considerations must be handled in your own mind before you do any writing.

As an example, many numismatic writers who have written columns for a few years feel that it might be appropriate to publish the columns in a collection. If this is done by a coin dealer, there is a ready market for them. When this is done by the average writer, reconsideration must be made.

When was the last time you went into a regular book store (B. Dalton, Walden Books, etc.), when to the hobby field and looked for a collection of columns? You probably never did and, if one existed, you probably did not buy it. Instead you either bought

GETTING A BOOK INTO PRINT (con't)

By Ted Schwarz, NLG

one of the catalogues or you bought a book divided into normal chapters. This is true for most people and the reason why a collection of hobby columns seldom succeeds. Instead, the writer can reach a broader market by reworking the columns so that, after grouping related columns together, he or she has full chapters of several pages in length, not 500 to 1,000 word columns which are very obvious for what they are.

A number of the smaller publishing companies with direct access to a predictable number of hobby buyers, may be interested in a straight collection of columns. If this is the route you want to go in order to get a first book, there is nothing wrong with it. However, you should recognize that this is not a mass market appeal. Just that slight change, rewriting the related works so they follow in smooth chapter arrangement, can make the difference as to where you sell what is basically the same material.

Next, determine the broadest possible market for your work and do not try to reach beyond that. "Everyone" will not buy your work. Thus you must be very realistic about who will buy it.

I think my favorite example of this is a book that Don Kagin wrote on territorial coinage. Don's work evolved from his Ph.D. thesis. It was a subject area of such narrow interest that there was only two ways to do -- publishing within Kagin's for the relatively limited number of buyers for this type of material or going for mass market sales. Don decided to somewhat rework the book and go for mass market sales, a situation which resulted in Arco Publishing Company bringing forth the book. This gave him exposure to the broadest possible market and still ensured sales to the client base as well as the clients for this type of material who had never worked with Kagin's. This approach gave Don the greatest possible chance for success with the book and also introduced many casual readers to a field about which they had previously been ignorant. It was no longer just a hobby book but one which could also bring general readers into the hobby.

Keeping this in mind, what types of books seem to have the greatest chance for sale?

My research of existing books in print (you are only competing with those books for sale in book stores. You are not competing with any book in libraries or which have



gone out of print) and forthcoming books indicates there are basically three areas of interest.

One is in the general book on collecting. These books make an appearance every year or two and will probably always sell directly during their life time (from one month to one year, depending upon the company, for a hard back and from three weeks to a year more, depending upon the distributor, for a paper back). If there are a number of these books on the market when you want to sell yours, just wait two or three months before querying a publisher and that should give plenty to time for the market to change again.

The second type of book is the "make money through rare coins" type of volume. This may be part of a general book on collectible investing or may just stay with making money in rare coins. These appear almost as frequently as basic guides and are either done by acknowledged experts or by people who interview experts and quote them as well as providing their own expertise. Any knowledgeable hobbyists can do one of these although your sales chance is increased when you quote names or work with a publisher who has close contact with the hobby field itself. These books have a broader appeal than just the hobby market and again will probably always be with us.

Next comes the more specialized books. These are volumes of relatively narrow interest such as world coins, ancient coins, and even territorial coins such as those about which Don wrote. How you write about them will determine the interest of a national publisher.

For example, if you want to maintain a strictly scholarly approach to ancient coins, foreign coins, or whatever, you are probably going to be limited to the university press market. You can do very well through these outlets but their distribution will be somewhat limited and, in a few cases, sales will be so low that no money is earned by the writer.

More realistic is to go the popular market approach. For example, you can tell the delightful stories behind the people involved with the coins. You can deal with unusual history of coins. You can deal with the people and events symbolized by the coins. My first book, COINS AS LIVING HISTORY, used just such an approach and was ideal for Arco. A social history of U.S. coins sold to A.S. Barnes, again for national distribution. This

type of situation is typical of the success other writers have had with numerous companies. So long as the books are a "good read" instead of an exercise in engineering, chemistry, and general technology, they will often have very strong appeal.

In addition, you can use this approach to produce books for children. Many children's publishers like general books on collecting as well as those which provide pure fun for the reader as he or she learns about coins in a context quite different from the more serious works. Your research may be the same and your attitude may be the same but it is the style of writing which makes the difference in the sales.

After you have considered all these factors, the next step is to locate a publisher. The easiest way is to start with the two best marketing tools readily available throughout the United States. The first is the book WRITER'S MARKET which is annually updated in October. As I am working on this article, the 1984 edition is current. However, by October, you will want the 1985 edition.

The second resource is Publisher's Weekly, the trade journal for the book business. Your library is likely to have it and you should study as many paper backs as possible. These should most importantly include the special issues which come out each year related to Spring and Fall books as well as the special issues on Children's books. Your librarian will be able to guide you on these.

Do not worry about reading these magazines but rather turn each page and study the advertising. Companies will announce their new books in Publisher's Weekly. By studying the advertising, you can get a sense of new directions for companies, the type of books being purchased and whether or not companies which buy hobby books already have the type of book you want to sell. By checking both Publisher's Weekly and WRITER'S MARKET, you will be out of the "hit-or-miss" category and only be contacting appropriate publishers.

Contact the publishers by letter first, including a self-addressed stamped envelope. Be highly professional even if this is your first book or your first attempt to freelance. Do not say that you are a beginner and do not go into details about your credentials where they do not relate to the particular market. Be specific about where the interest will lie with your book and

any special sales appeals you may have. The fact that you are known in the hobby field can be a help because this gives one base for retailing.

Once you get the go ahead to send your book, you need only send approximately 50 to 100 pages plus a chapter by chapter breakdown. The final books will typically be from 240 to 320 pages with most standard publishing companies. This gives them a book which is manageable in both physical size and in eventual retail charge. It also fits nicely in the size desired when paper back reprints occur.

Choose the publishing company from your own research in this manner. Usually if you talk with well meaning individuals in the hobby field, you are likely to either get misled or become involved with a house that can not distribute as effectively as your books may warrant. There is always a great desire to sell a book in this field but if it can be sold to a company that can give it the greatest possible audience, that is preferable from a small production company which may have only a 500 to 1,000 first printing with no expectations of a second printing.

Readers of this column who have further questions should feel free to contact me whether by letter at: Post Office Box 22394, Flagstaff, Arizona 86002-2394, or through my office/home phone: (602) 779-2838. I would prefer not to be bothered before the afternoon since mornings are my best writing periods. I am on west coast time which means a three hour difference from the east coast. If I am out of town, my service can let you know how to reach me or you can try back. Whatever you decide to do, the market for coin books does remain fairly open and most if not all members of N.L.G. have both the skills and the knowledge to produce a book if they so choose. The key to your success will be preparing it for the marketplace and not for either personal convenience or self satisfaction. When you think of the reader first, and remember that you are a reader too, you will be assured of success.

We have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it.

Put off until tomorrow anything you have yet to learn how to do.

Some brief pleasures lead to long regrets.

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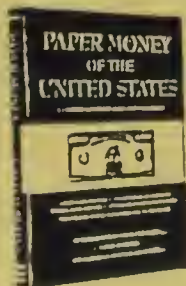
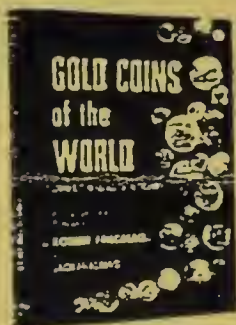


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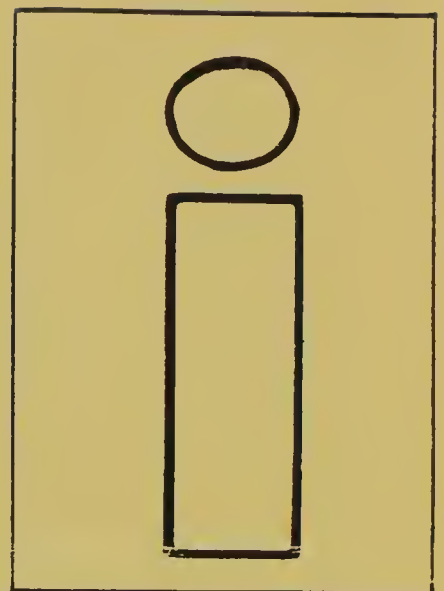
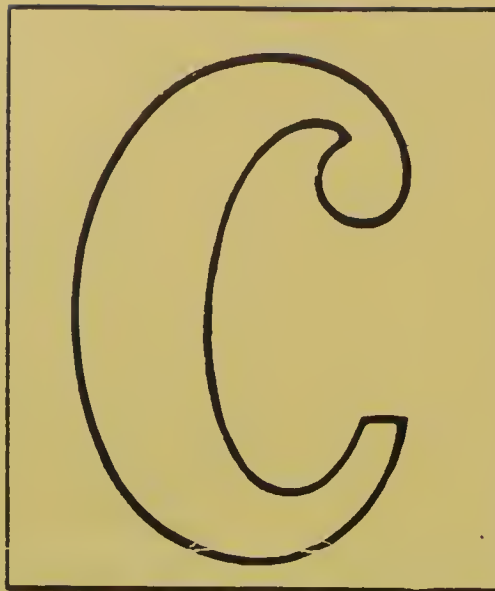


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